

1/29/70

Dear Dick,

Your 26th mailing, of the 2-pp add to the 399 study and your 1/8 to HR, came this morning. It is good to write of things other than preoccupied me yesterday, the lingering effects of which I feel today.

On 399, these small suggestions: last part, appendix, rather than saying that "A" metallic fragment was deposited in the chest, which may be an inadequate representation, I would take the space, in any revision, to say that after this injury was cleansed a metallic fragment was visible in post-operative X-rays (and is not mentioned in the Report or in any of the testimony before the members of the Commission). Rather than saying, several metallic fragments were deposited in Connally's right wrist, I'd suggest saying that after all of his motion, and after that wound was cleansed, several metallic fragments were recovered from the wrist. Of the thigh fragment, you might want to add that its size was carefully hidden by the Commission, in both testimony and Report.

My reasons are to indicate the high probability that even this totally disqualifying degree of fragmentation acknowledged is entirely insufficient, for there is high probability other fragments were deposited and not recovered.

As you realize from my letter to John and his to me, he did duplicate my work with the end of 399, they did take a picture for him (he says more than one), and this or any of these cannot possibly be mine. Therefore, in your consideration of my argument that more has been removed - and I am not suggesting any accident, as with the Tink picture - I think you should bear in mind that they just cannot and do not lose pictures and negatives of this stuff, nor is it likely that Johnson has forgotten it. We had quite a business over it. You have seen his reaction when he is merely with me. I am anxious for your confirmation that they had it when we were there together and for a stat of the print they sent you. Here John's dishonesty may have a side benefit....I do not think anyone can understand how much that rotten business really sickens me, how it preys on my jangled nerves.

Your letter to Howard is the best and the most. When I came to your opinion, that you have trouble believing Specter is bereft of conscience, I made a note to argue with you, but when I came to the next line, where you show awareness of his "instinct for self-preservation", we are in complete accord, except, possibly, in degree. I think it dominates everything he did after the full enormity of what he had done in taking the autopsy testimony dawned upon him. I briefed Howard this way.

You are the first to my recollection to articulate my long belief, "every time they push the panic button we benefit". I have worked on this basis for a long time and you are aware of some of the benefits. I have gone further, in ways I have not communicated to you simply because I did not want to prepare possible eavesdroppers. And your advice re: med. examiners is so important. It is perhaps even more of a problem with me because of my nature and method. I try and engaged the interviewee in conversation, just turn him own, which requires a certain amount of communication of this hazardous kind. I tried to prepare Howard, but you put it much better than I did, and more succinctly.

I think your formulation, "I can't refute the witnesses who said they saw rifle and/or shooting from this window" in to bestow a credibility on this "testimony" it does not warrant. The only one to even claim to have seen shooting

is history's least credible, Brennan. The "testimony" on a rifle being positively seen is so wanting the Commission had to skirt around it, as a rereading of this part of the Report will disclose. They say their conclusion doesn't rest on Brennan alone (and even Curry found him incredible), and they follow with nothingness, Fisher and friend, Euins (Pipe thing) and Jackson, who had to have seen shooting if he saw rifle. There remains no evidence that a shot was fired from there an no credible evidence a rifle was even seen there. I think you bent too far backward here.

Last words, pg 2 "Besides, I do not think that knowledge of the location is as important as other factors". I disagree. If we have, as I now do, positive proof they deliberately mislocated this wound, that is quintessential in several areas: how the crime was committed, how many people it required, how many shots were fired and from where and by whom, conspiracy, etc. And what more lucid exposition on the integrity of the work and those who did it, those who, knowing better, have been silent? On the basis of our earlier, negative knowledge, your comment can be justified but today I think it is wrong.

Though I disagree with these few things, I think it is an excellent letter which should be of great benefit to Howard.

I will be at the Archives tomorrow, but only to see something I have forced out, not connected with anything in which you have been interested. I may also skim a few documents. But I will not be there for long and will not make an issue of 399 and the pix. I would rather see your picture first and get them to take the picture I want for me, to attract no great attention to this interest. I'll then pick Howard up at Bud's and we'll come here.

If you find anything I told John unwarranted, unfair or invalid, please do tell me, as promptly as you can...I find myself wondering if he plans to use this stuff in LOOK. If he does, I'll sue them both, if I have to be my own lawyer, as in this case I believe would be unlikely, with the written record - have, including his original letters. If you have any suggestions, I can use them. This is very troubling, upsetting, a further contribution to my anxieties....And I now wonder, as I did earlier, if he, in fact, might not be the source of the snide comments Lifton made that required knowledge he could have gotten only from mail interception or one of a very small number of people telling him. His comment did quote John, but Lifton also fabricates this sort of thing. It is SOP with him, for multiple reasons.

The usual haste,